

External Communication and Media Issues

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Tulsa District case study
- Lessons learned and recommendations
- Questions



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Things to remember

- Simple is better
- Be careful to not create panic
- People often hear what they want to hear and not what you actually mean
- **Engage your public affairs office early**



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Tulsa District case study

- High levels of BGA in several lakes in 2011.
- SWT Never saw this high of levels in this many lakes simultaneously in OK
- No state guidance at this point
- In Kansas, state is the lead on BGA



Adapting Kansas's signs

- District adapted Kansas's signs for posting
- Two levels: Advisory and Warning



WARNING

HARMFUL ALGAE PRESENT
Lake unsafe for people and pets

Until further notice:

- Swimming, water skiing, and water contact is prohibited.
No nade o practique el esquí acuático.
- Do not drink untreated lake water.
No tome el agua tratado del lago.
- Keep pets and livestock away.
Mantenga alejados las mascotas y el ganado.
- Clean fish well and discard entrails.
Limpie bien el pescado y deseche las tripas.
- Avoid areas of visible algae accumulation when boating.
Evite las áreas con espuma o verdín cuando ande en lancha.

In case of contact with harmful algae, call your doctor or veterinarian if you or your animals experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, eye irritation, respiratory symptoms, or other unexplained illness.

Report new algae blooms to	Call your local health department:
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For more information:



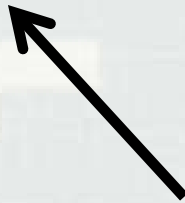
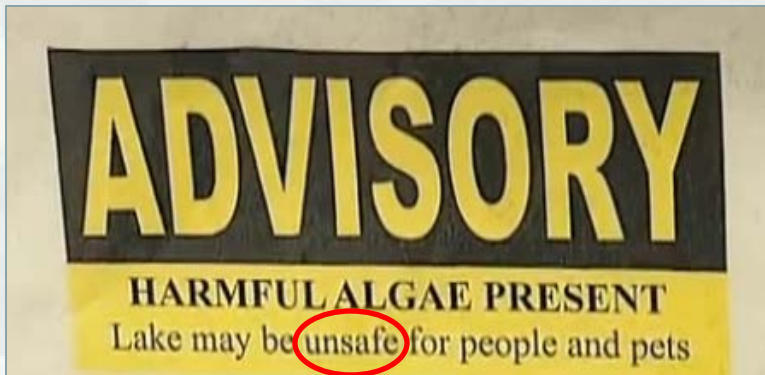
Major differences between KS and OK lakes

- Oklahoma lakes tend to be in more populated areas
- Many Oklahoma lakes support large resorts and businesses
- Many Oklahoma lakes bring in out of town visitors



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What's in a word?



WARNING
HARMFUL ALGAE PRESENT
Lake **unsafe** for people and pets

Until further notice:

- Swimming, water skiing, and water contact is **prohibited**.
- Do not drink untreated lake water.
- Keep pets and livestock away.
- Clean fish well and discard entrails.
- Avoid areas of visible algae accumulation when boating.

NO PETS

In case of contact with harmful algae, call your doctor or veterinarian if you or your animals experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, eye irritation, respiratory symptoms, or other unexplained illness.

Report new algae blooms to: _____ Call your local health department: _____

For more information:



Media releases



The blue-green algae warning for the Gentry Creek area of Eufaula Lake has changed to the advisory level, therefore contact with the water at Gentry Creek is *discouraged*.

A blue -green algae warning was previously issued for the Feyodi Park area of Keystone Lake. Swimming, water skiing, and water contact is *prohibited* in this area. In addition, the Cedar Creek Cove and Old Mannford/Old Hwy 51 areas of Keystone Lake and the Taylor Ferry swim beach at Fort Gibson Lake are closed due to blue-green algae.



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Media releases

Sign	Lake	Area	Level	Remarks
CLOSED	Fort Gibson	Taylor Ferry Swim Beach	Closed	Beach closed. Contact with water prohibited.
	Eufaula	Porum Landing Swim Beach	Closed	Beach closed. Contact with water prohibited.
	Keystone	Cedar Creek Cove	Closed	Contact with water prohibited.
	Keystone	Old Mannford Old Hwy 51	Closed	Contact with water prohibited.
	Skiatook	Twin Points Swim Beach	Closed	Beach closed. Contact with water prohibited.
	Eufaula	Porum Landing	Warning Harmful algae present Unsafe for people and pets	Porum Landing recreation area open, but do not go in the water. Contact with water prohibited.
	Keystone	Feyodi Park	Warning Harmful algae present Unsafe for people and pets	Considered to have adverse health effects. Due to test result levels, contact with water prohibited.
	Fort Gibson	All areas not in a warning or closure	Advisory Harmful algae present May be unsafe for people and pets	Swimming, water skiing and water contact is discouraged. If bloom is observed, avoid and report sightings.
	Eufaula	All areas not in a warning or closure	Advisory Harmful algae present May be unsafe for people and pets	Swimming, water skiing and water contact is discouraged. If bloom is observed, avoid and report sightings.
	Keystone	All areas not in a warning or closure	Advisory Harmful algae present May be unsafe for people and pets	Swimming, water skiing and water contact is discouraged. If bloom is observed, avoid and report sightings.
	Tenkiller	All areas	Advisory Harmful algae present May be unsafe for people and pets	Swimming, water skiing and water contact is discouraged. If bloom is observed, avoid and report sightings.
	Skiatook	All areas not in a warning or closure	Advisory Harmful algae present May be unsafe for people and pets	Swimming, water skiing and water contact is discouraged. If bloom is observed, avoid and report sightings.



Media response

This summer, the sickening slime made many places at a number of northeast Oklahoma lakes off-limits for swimming.

Dangerous Blue-Green Algae Back at Area Lakes

Oklahoma lake visitors are urged to beware of blue-green algae, low water levels

In light of low water levels and the rise of blue-green algae, officials are urging visitors to Oklahoma lakes to use caution this Labor Day weekend.



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Media response

Officials say people can still go fishing, boating and camping near the lake, just not swimming, and the warning is in effect for all of Lake Texoma, not just the western parts reported last week. They say if people touch the algae it can cause vomiting, skin rashes and in some extreme cases it can even be fatal.

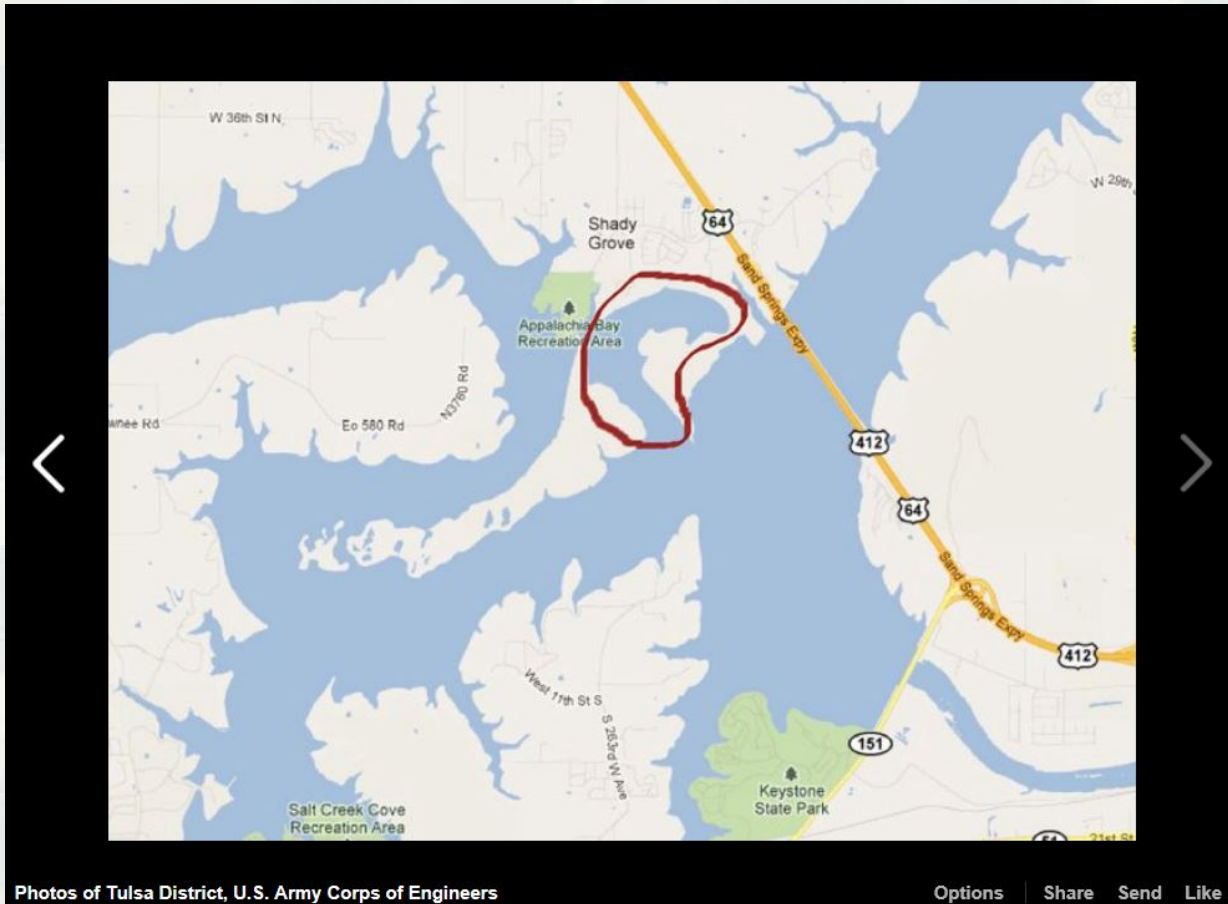
He's not the only one with concerns. Dozens of people have also changed their plans at the lake this holiday weekend to avoid the potentially deadly lake bacteria.

LAKE TEXOMA — A popular North Texas lake has been declared off-limits to swimmers ahead of the popular Labor Day weekend.



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Social media response



Photos of Tulsa District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Options Share Send Like



Chris N Natalie Holley ▸ Tulsa District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

July 19, 2011

Map showing Dry Lake Cove On Keystone Lake that one of our friends said as of last night was nasty green looking and stinky.

Like · Comment · Share



Tulsa District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Thanks Chris you've been very helpful! We'll pass this along as well

July 19, 2011 at 1:56pm · Like



Chris N Natalie Holley Your welcome! Just ready to be able to get back out on the lake safely soon w/ the family.

July 19, 2011 at 2:00pm · Like



Write a comment...



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92QJams Baltimore

39,201 people like this.

Like



106.1 The Twister

Wyatt Cooper likes this.

Like



97.5 KMOD

Wyatt Cooper likes this.

Like



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Social media response



Charles Vahdatipour

July 25, 2011

Has there been any more algae reported on Tenkiller, or are the same places near the dam still the areas of concern? (so to speak) looking to go out today and hadn't noticed anything more. Thanks!



Todd Durrett ▸ **Tulsa District, U.S. Army Engineers**

August 30, 2011

What happens if we go swimming? Its a warning and the lake isn't closed so if we swim at r won risk? Do we get a ticket if we go swimming

Like · Comment

8



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Social media response



Andy Evans ▸ Tulsa District, U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers
September 1, 2011

Don't worry guys....I feel fine after hanging out at North Island today.

Like · Comment · Share

10 people like this.



Kirsten Aller Hurley THAT is funny
September 1, 2011 at 6:22pm · Like



James Manuel It is indeed funny. How did I ever survive growing up in Ft Gibson and swimming in pound and lakes with algae and moss all the time?
September 1, 2011 at 10:21pm · Like



James Manuel Maybe that is the problem, people did not have good body systems any more.
September 1, 2011 at 10:22pm · Like



Write a comment...



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Social media response



Freddie Beckwith ▸ Tulsa District, U.S. Army
Corps of Engineers
September 2, 2011

I am of the belief the 'blue-green algae' story coming from the Corps of Engineers is the latest ploy (since no gas grills) to prohibit fun on beautiful Lake Texoma... In fact, I'll be there this weekend boating, swimming, tubing, skiing, noodlin', splashing in the water, and later that evening, I may even have a Titos-n-lake water cocktail! 😊

Like · Comment



Darla Warren ▸ Tulsa District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
August 31, 2011

Corps employees. Thanks for your hard work. Too bad you have to suffer so much negativity. It is not like you made the BGA. Thanks for informing the public. I am just as disappointed as the next guy. I have had my reservations for months. If we put our boat in the water & put it in a different body of water or back in Texoma later does it spread BGA?

Like · Comment

👍 4 💬 3



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Social media response



Donna Sparks ▸ **Tulsa District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

August 30, 2011

Channel 8 news (wfaa in Dallas) just reported that Lake Texoma is closed.
Maybe Ranger Billy Williams needs to inform them of the upcoming report from the Corp of Engineers re: the entire lake closing?

Like · Comment

👍 1 💬 9



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Effects of BGA response

- Loss of revenue and impacts to businesses
- Interest from elected officials



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New sign

WARNING

HARMFUL ALGAE PRESENT

Lake unsafe for people and pets

Until further notice:

- Contact with water is not recommended.
(e.g., swimming, waterskiing).

Contacto con agua es desalentar.

- Do not drink untreated lake water.

No tome el agua tratado del lago.

- Keep pets and livestock away.

Mantenga alejados las mascotas y el ganado.

- Clean fish well and discard entrails.

Limpie bien el pescado y deseché las tripas.

- Avoid areas of visible algae accumulation when boating.

Evite las áreas con espuma o verdín cuando ande en lancha.



In case of contact with harmful algae, call your doctor or veterinarian if you or your animals experience nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, eye irritation, respiratory symptoms, or other unexplained illness.

Report new algae blooms to

Call your local health department:



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New signs

Blue-green Algae Awareness Level

ADVISORY

Elevated Risk of Adverse Health Effects


BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOMS ARE PRESENT

For Your Safety, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District
Recommends the Following:

- Children and pets are more likely to get sick because of blue-green algae.
- Use caution when swimming, water skiing and coming into contact with water.
- DO NOT drink untreated lake water.
- Keep pets/livestock off of the beach and out of the water.
- Avoid areas with visible algae accumulation.

Symptoms from exposure may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, eye irritation, respiratory problems or other unexplained illness.

For more information go to:

 www.deq.state.ok.us
or
www.swt.usace.army.mil

To Report Illness Due to Exposure, Please Call the Oklahoma State Department
of Health, Acute Disease Service at: **1-405-271-4060**



Tulsa District vs. Grayson County

- Judge Drue Bynum disagreed with how Tulsa District was handling BGA
- Held press conference saying the lake was fine
- Grayson County Health Department started own testing based on toxins not cell counts



HB 259

- Directed OK Department of Tourism to develop website for reporting BGA
- Tourism Dept. would also come up with specific language to be used
- Required advisories only when both cell counts and toxicity results exceed WHO guidelines of 100,000 cells per mL and 20 micrograms per liter of microcystin
- Since OK now had policy, Corps agreed to follow it to the best of our ability



Check My OK Lake

OKLAHOMA

SAVE & SHARE: 0 ITEMS | STATE PARKS | REQUEST FREE BROCHURES | SEARCH

THINGS TO DO | CITIES & REGIONS | HOTELS & LODGING | DINING | INTERESTS | FESTIVALS & EVENTS | TRAVEL TOOLS

OKLAHOMA LAKE CONDITIONS

With more than 200 lakes and over one million surface acres of water for boating and swimming, Oklahoma has always been a haven for water recreation. In recent years, Oklahoma and other states have been impacted by the spread of blue-green algae. Learn how to keep you and your family safe on Oklahoma's waterways and find answers to all of your questions about blue-green algae and water safety here.

Simply browse this section for frequently asked questions, water safety tips, lake updates, blue-green algae identification tips and more. Before you pack up the car and head to your lakeside destination, choose your lake from the drop-down menu below to view the most up-to-date lake conditions and testing results.

Check Current Conditions >> --Choose a Lake--

- OKLAHOMA LAKE CONDITIONS
- LAKES AND BOATING INFORMATION
- LEARN TO RECOGNIZE BLUE-GREEN ALGAE
- FAQS BLUE-GREEN ALGAE
- RESEARCH BLUE-GREEN ALGAE
- TIPS WATER SAFETY
- OKLAHOMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
- ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
- GRAND RIVER DAM AUTHORITY
- OKLAHOMA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

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- Oklahoma Deals
- Oklahoma State Parks

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- Visitor Information
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CONNECTIONS

Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, YouTube, Instagram, Email, Google+

Email: info@travelok.com



Check My OK Lake



Fort Gibson Lake

Blue-Green Algae Update

The most recent blue-green algae report was received from the lake manager on Tuesday, May 27th, 2014.

Testing was performed on 5/21/14 and while blue green algae cell counts were elevated in the Rocky Point Beach and Taylor Ferry North Beach areas of Fort Gibson Lake, toxicity levels reported on 5/23/14 are below the World Health Organization threshold. Visitors should not drink untreated water or let themselves or pets come in contact with areas of discolored water. Although swimming in these areas is discouraged, visitors can still enjoy boating and many land activities around Fort Gibson Lake.

For current conditions, contact the lake manager at 918-682-4314.

Fishing Update: Monday, May 5th, 2014

White bass are slow. Catfish are good on cut bait, punch bait, and shad at 10-20 ft. Crappie are good around Rocky Point, Oil Capital docks, and around the Jetty in Western hills. Largemouth bass are good on crankbaits and plastic worms 5-10 ft. around structure.

Other Lake Updates: Monday, May 5th, 2014

Elevation is 1 ft. above normal. Water is 64 degrees and clear.



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Signs posted at lakes

WELCOME TO THE LAKE

- If it's **GREEN** on top, **STOP** (it's probably a toxic blue green algae bloom which can be harmful to animals and people.)
- Before you get in the water check the lake water quality at <http://CHECKMYOKLAKE.COM> for any recreational use advisories.



Signs posted at lakes

If it's **green** on top—**STOP!**

Blue-green Algae Awareness
Elevated Risk of Adverse Health Effects

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOMS ARE PRESENT

For Your Safety, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District
Recommends the Following:

- Use caution when swimming, water skiing and coming into contact with water.
- DO NOT drink untreated lake water.
- Keep pets/livestock off of the beach and out of the water.
- Avoid areas with visible algae accumulation.

Children and pets are more likely to get sick than adults because of blue green algae

Symptoms from exposure may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, skin rash, eye irritation, respiratory problems or other unexplained illness.

For more information go to:



www.TravelOK.com/checkmyoklake

or

www.swt.usace.army.mil

To Report Illness Due to Exposure, Please Contact Your Doctor or
the Oklahoma Poison Control Hotline at: **1-800-222-1222**



Lessons learned

- Watch wording
- Be careful not to incite panic
- Engage stakeholders early
- Hold public meetings early
- Educate vs. Dictate
- Catching rumors early
- Speak with one voice



Questions?



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